

## **Innovative Project Funding Proposal**

### **1) Describe your Project:**

Our project involves a close, collaborative partnership with the Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA). VHA is one of 24 Moving To Work (MTW) demonstration projects in the country. Moving To Work requires Section 8 and public housing residents to participate in employment programs.

CSO WorkFirst program specialists identify VHA MTW residents who are in long term WF sanction status.

Once identified, contact is made with the VHA case manager by CSO staff. The VHA case manager contacts the MTW customer and discusses the MTW requirement to seek and maintain employment. (see attached letter). The customer is required then to participate in their WF activity to maintain Section 8/public housing eligibility. If barriers are discovered both agencies work with the client to overcome these or a new plan is established to promote participation.

Frequent communication and case staffings occur between CSO/VHA case managers. The goal is to re-engage the customer/resident in MTW compliance and their WF program and to show the customer a collaborative effort on their behalf.

The project supports overall WF performance goals by re-engaging the sanctioned customer in the WF program, thereby relieving the sanction and moving the customer towards TANF exit.

The total potential number of persons served is the number of WF sanctioned customers residing in Section 8/public housing units. To date we have collaborated on 46 WF customers since May 2003 when the project began. As of 9/30/2003, 42 % are no longer in sanction, are participating and remain in subsidized housing.

Forty two percent of the previously sanctioned customers have cured their sanction as a result of the collaboration between DSHS and VHA. Case Managers from DSHS and VHA recommend that successful families be rewarded for getting out of sanction by providing them with items such as children's clothing, household items or adult clothing that are not available through other funding sources. Any amount awarded would be equally divided between the successful customers. Rewards to the client could be based on individual needs that promote independence and promote continued participation.

No additional resources are needed because staff in both agencies has incorporated the extra workload in to their case manager duties.

### **2) What makes this project innovative?**

This project supports the program designs of two different agencies by developing and encouraging a collaborative and supportive working relationship. The unserved need is that the customer sees a unified approach and message to program requirements by two community agencies, DSHS and VHA.

The specific population is long term WF sanctioned residents in Section 8/public housing.

The overall project design;

- begins by identifying long term sanctioned customers in subsidized housing
- is supported by a close, collaborative and communicative relationship between DSHS and VHA
- identifies community and other resources, that different agency staff may be aware of and have access, to assist the customer in participating in the WF program
- encourages the sharing of information between agency staff resulting in agency program goals being achieved and saving agency staff time
- means those customers with continued non-compliance in the WF program, after the combined intervention of two agency staff to help them move towards WF re-engagement, are aware of the consequence of the non-compliance – loss of subsidized housing eligibility

Success is measured by relief of WF sanction status and TANF exit.

### 3) Partnerships

Partners are DSHS and VHA. Success also results in Employment Security involvement through referral for Job Search activities.

VHA and the CSO have a long and strong partnership in Clark County. Our next step is the invitation of CSO WPS staff to attend ongoing case staffings with VHA MTW/TANF customers to review and coordinate both agency program requirements.